

Needs and Questions the Panel May Handle

Request for Written Submissions from Member States and Relevant Stakeholders

Member states, during the resumed first session of the Open-ended Working Group (OEWG1.2), requested the Secretariat of the OEWG to solicit input from Member States and relevant stakeholders regarding the **needs** and **questions** the panel may handle in order to inform negotiations through the OEWG process (OEWG2 and OEWG3).

In support of this request, member States are invited to provide submissions through their respective national focal points (list of focal points available [at this link](#)). Non-government stakeholders are invited to submit their submissions on behalf of their organization or group. Once complete, please submit this filled document to SPP-CWP@un.org. All submissions will be uploaded online and will be summarized in an INF document in order to inform the work undertaken at OEWG2 and OEWG3.

Please complete and submit this form by 5 September 2023.

Several documents prepared by the secretariat for OEWG1.2 are of relevance to this submission, including:

- The Mapping and Gap analysis that was presented at UNEA 4 ([UNEP/EA.4/INF.9](#))
- The UNEP report “Assessment of options for strengthening the science-policy interface at the international level for the sound management of chemicals and waste” <https://wedocs.unep.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.11822/33808/OSSP.pdf>
- UNEP/SPP-CWP/OEWG.1/INF/1 - [UNEA Resolution 5/8 entitled “Science-policy panel to contribute further to the sound management of chemicals and waste and to prevent pollution”](#)
- The stakeholder survey conducted between OEWG 1.1 and OEWG 1.2, which was summarized in Information document “Stakeholder Engagement Feedback” ([UNEP/SPP-CWP/OEWG.1/INF/6](#))
- Reports of OEWG1.1 and OEWG1.2, available with all other meeting documents on the [OEWG website](#)

Contact information

What is your name/surname?

Miriam L Diamond

Who are you submitting on behalf of?

International Panel on Chemical Pollution (IPCP)

Are you a national focal point?

no

What is your country?

IPCP is an international organization of independent scientists

What is your title?

Vice-chair of IPCP

I'm also Professor, University of Toronto, Canada

What is your gender?

female

What is your email address?

1. Please list and if appropriate briefly describe, your preference for which needs the panel may handle. (If possible, please rank your responses, where 1 indicates your top preference):

We support the needs identified in Annex I “Multi-stakeholder workshop on strengthening the science-policy interface in international chemicals governance: summary”, to the UNEA Report 2019 “Strengthening the Science-Policy Interface in International Chemicals Governance”.

In addition, a key need that the panel should fulfill is an intergovernmental forum to prioritize issues and identify policy-relevant information, which in turn, can enable governments and other actors to take effective and clear actions to reduce chemicals and waste.

2. Please provide any relevant comments on the needs you have listed above:

The panel, by its core structure of being intergovernmental, provides an international forum for discussion. The complexity of international trade, supply chains and global environmental and economic trends requires that any meaningful solutions to reducing local to global pollution and waste burdens, both legacy and current, be devised in an international forum that assembles state and non-state actors.

Here, the critical need for discussion is prioritizing and identifying potential solutions for those prioritized issues. The intergovernmental nature of the panel is the crucial “value added” to past activities, such as compiling the Global Chemicals Outlook. The latter has been extremely valuable, but does not allow the global community to prioritize issues and to debate potential solutions. The intergovernmental panel brings together participating low, middle and high income countries from global geographies, with their diverse of priorities, to hear, learn and then debate which issues are indeed most urgently in need of addressing through the panel’s activities.

3. Please list, and if appropriate briefly describe, your preference for which questions the panel may handle. (If possible, please rank your responses, where 1 indicates your top preference):

As an individual, I responded to the Delphi questionnaire on prioritization. Here, we raise the same three issues. They are NOT prioritized according to number presented as these are all very different types of issues.

1. Loss of biodiversity and human health effects from increasing pesticide use.
2. Limited assessment capacity for the increasing number and amount of chemicals produced.
3. Trends toward a circular economy, but impeded by a non-circular chemical industry.

4. Please provide any relevant comments on the questions you have listed above:

1. Loss of biodiversity and human health effects from increasing pesticide use.

Global pesticide production and use have increased dramatically prompted by the need to increase agriculture yields. The global biological crop protection market has been predicted to grow at a CAGR of 11.3% between 2016-2021. Importantly, the toxicity of applied pesticides, and specifically insecticides to aquatic invertebrates and pollinators, has more than doubled between 2005 and 2015, even while total use of some pesticides has decreased. The toxicity of pesticides to nontarget plants has also increased. Even highly hazardous pesticides remain in use, especially in LICs.

Pesticide toxicity has caused wide-ranging impacts to the health of farmers and adjacent communities. For human health, those effects include reproductive disorders, cancers, neurological disorders such as Parkinson’s disease, respiratory issues and acute poisoning. The prevalence of human

unintentional, acute pesticide poisoning is estimated at 385 million cases leading to 11,000 fatalities. High rates of pesticide use have been directly linked to a loss of biodiversity, specifically an alarming decline in all insects, especially pollinators, and insectivorous biota such as birds.

2. Limited assessment capacity for increasing number and amount of chemicals produced.

Chemicals assessment is the foundation of sound management but the global capacity and ability to conduct such assessments and implement effective risk mitigation measures are limited by:

1. the capacity is out-paced by the rate of introducing new chemicals and the rate of chemicals production,
2. the capacity and data needed are concentrated in HIC although a large part of chemicals production takes place in LIC and MIC,
3. a lack of reliable chemical property and toxicity data and sufficient methods persists despite significant gains in assessment science, although mostly at the screening level.

A wide diversity of chemicals is increasingly being produced, used and disposed of with insufficient knowledge of their potential to impact human and ecosystem health. Of the many examples, we provide three below:

1. replacement of chemicals with known harm, with others where harm is later discovered, e.g., bisphenol A vs. other bisphenols,
2. increasing production of biocidal chemicals which are linked to increases in antibiotic-resistant bacteria,
3. production and widespread uses of a proliferation of PFASs leading to increasing areas of drinking water contaminated with known and unknown, but highly persistent PFAS.

Some of the solutions discussed to address this fundamental problem is that of “chemical simplification” by reducing the proliferation in the number of chemicals registered for use globally, and considering the need and feasibility of a global cap on chemical emissions, production and/or consumption as is the case for Greenhouse Gas emissions.

3. Trends toward a circular economy, but impeded by non-circular chemical industry.

Circularity is now embraced as a concept for achieving environmental sustainability. Circularity offers a change to the linear extract-produce-use-dispose product and material flow that is unsustainable. Questions persist such as how circularity can actually be achieved, how can it be measured, and what are enabling elements and barriers? One major barrier to recycling many materials is their chemical complexity. with more than 10,000 substances used in plastic production. One solution is reducing the complexity of chemicals in plastics and other materials by simplifying their chemistry, raised as a solution to the issue #2.

Human and ecosystem health is highly impacted by society’s inability to effectively reuse and recycle most materials, excluding high-value metals. Impacts to ecosystem health come from land degradation, loss of biodiversity, and soil and water pollution caused by virgin resource extraction and waste produced, including “managed” landfills. Human health is also affected by these impacts -- through the production, use in manufacturing and releases during the use phase. These impacts occur globally, although the greatest impacts from virgin resource extraction and waste dumping are in LIC.

The new intergovernmental panel present the opportunity for exploring and advancing the science and practice of solutions that will move us towards a circular economy.

